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STATES DEVELOP WATERFOWL AREAS WITH FEDERAL AID FUNDS

Federal aid money has made possible waterfowl development in every one of the 48 States, the records of the Fish and Wildlife Service show, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay said today.

The developments range in size from tiny marshes created in New York to supply new nesting territory and increase duck production, to the big 54,000-acre Roseau River waterfowl management area established by the State of Minnesota, it was pointed out.

The first waterfowl project of this kind was in Ogden Bay in Utah in 1938 where Federal aid funds were used to turn a 6,500-acre mud flat, which had been a death trap for thousands of waterfowl each year from botulism, into a public hunting ground and refuge which now is used by as high as 800,000 ducks and geese and which provides 25,000 hunter-days annually. The botulism rate has been cut to ten percent of what it was before the development.

During the 17-year period, the States have expended \$37,779,173 on the Federal aid waterfowl projects. This is about 30 percent of the total money spent on wildlife restoration under the Pittman-Robertson program.

The 11 percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition provides the funds for the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. Annual collections of this tax are apportioned to the States on the basis of a formula which gives equal weight to the number of paid license holders and land areas. States pay 25 percent of the costs and Federal aid funds cover the remaining 75 percent.

Under this program, the States have acquired 483,919 acres of land for waterfowl purposes at a cost of \$13,496,280. They also have invested \$18,706,277 in the restoration, creation and maintenance of 1,415,923 acres of waterfowl management areas owned or otherwise controlled by the States. A total of \$5,576,616 has been spent by them in research work on waterfowl problems.

Part of the Federal aid money--in California as much as 50 percent of it--is used in farming operations to produce waterfowl food. California farms about 37,000 acres of land to grow grain for the heavy duck concentrations in that State every winter. Many other States also follow the practice of growing food for waterfowl use. In the eastern and southeastern States the problem of improving waterfowl habitat through vegetation control so that desirable species of food plants can become established has occupied the attention of Pittman-Robertson biologists for some time.

The approach in wetland restoration for waterfowl varies from State to State in keeping with local needs. In Iowa, the problem is to develop duck and goose nesting and resting areas in the regions of high priced cornlands. Here 70 percent of its Federal aid funds has been spent for such developments and 35 fine waterfowl areas totaling 16,948 acres are now in operation. New York has attacked the problem of increasing duck production by creating 650 individual small marshes of an average size of four acres.

Kansas has just completed two noteworthy projects. Water is now being diverted from the Arkansas River into its newly completed 20,000-acre Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl area. It also has the Marias des Cygne unit, containing 6,200 acres.

Other Federal aid projects include: Arkansas's 37,000-acre Bayou Meto; New Jersey's 13,000-acre Tuckahoe; Idaho's 11,000-acre North Lake, and Oregon's 12,500-acre Sauvie Island Game Management Area with 6,600 acres in refuge and 5,900 acres open to public hunting. Another outstanding Oregon area is the 14,000-acre Summer Lake project.

Georgia has begun to develop the 8,500-acre Altamaha Waterfowl Management Area, a tract with five islands and located amidst abandoned rice fields. When the work is completed hunting will be allowed on three islands and two will be held as permanent refuge. The management practices will provide for the farming of rice fields for waterfowl.

South Carolina is rehabilitating rice fields on the 7,000-acre Bear Island Waterfowl Area and has completed the major part of the dikes needed to control the water levels there. Missouri has developed the Duck Creek Wildlife Management Area in conjunction with the Fish and Wildlife Service's Mingo National Waterfowl Refuge. The State's area embraces 6,000 acres, containing a 1,773-acre lake and two marsh pools with a surface area totaling 1,283 acres.

In the field of waterfowl research, programs have been carried out in 44 States and in Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico.

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